



Joseph C. Grew, 1952

*Chase News Photo.*

# Turbulent Era

## *A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years*

1904-1945

Joseph C. <sup>*Joseph*</sup>Grew

EDITED BY WALTER JOHNSON

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## XXXVI

### The Emperor of Japan and Japan's Surrender<sup>1</sup>

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THROUGHOUT the war I took the position that propaganda by any branch of our Government against the Emperor of Japan, or any effort to bomb the Emperor's palace, should be withheld. I knew very well that when the time came for Japan's surrender, the Emperor was the only one who could bring it about, and that by issuing an Imperial Rescript, a document sacred to all Japanese, he alone could put it into effect. The Japanese militarists regarded themselves as superior to any civilian Prime Minister or Government and, as has been shown, they could wreck any Government merely by withholding support for any War Minister.

This is just what happened in August, 1945. The Japanese army, a considerable proportion of which had never fought and was fresh, wanted to fight to the last ditch. Had our own army been forced to bring about the final military defeat by invading first the island of Kyushu, and later the Kwantow plain on the main island of Honshu, the strategy envisaged, the Japanese would have fought on the beaches and in the streets and houses of the towns and villages, and finally in the caves in the higher land where our casualties would have been very high. Even when the Emperor finally ordered surrender, military elements in Tokyo rebelled and entered the Imperial Palace in an effort to kidnap the Emperor and to destroy the record presenting the Emperor's orders in his own voice, which was to be broadcast to the nation and to the forces afield. In this effort they failed, and the Emperor's Imperial Rescript calling upon the entire nation to surrender brought the war to an end.

As Acting Secretary of State I was fortunately able to influence this situation at home in the face of considerable difficulty

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Grew wrote this statement in 1950.

with certain agencies of our Government and certain sections of the press and with certain radio commentators who charged me with desiring to preserve the old feudal system in Japan. My position in the controversy seemed to me to be sound. I advocated waiting until we got to Tokyo to determine whether the Emperor would be a liability or an asset in turning Japan toward democracy. In the last analysis I felt that the Japanese people themselves must ultimately decide what sort of system they wanted. This was in accordance with the principles laid down in the Atlantic Charter and by many statesmen in the Allied countries. We could certainly not occupy Japan permanently.

As things turned out, the Emperor proved to be a very important and substantial asset to General MacArthur, and he cooperated effectively in bringing about the transition from the old to the new.

The Emperor had been charged with responsibility for the war, because he gave his approval to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Only those who are fully conversant with the former Japanese system of government can understand why the Emperor who, from all available evidence was bitterly opposed to the war, could not have stopped the attack. In actual fact the Emperor was no totalitarian dictator. Throughout history the Emperor has followed the influences in the Government and country of the predominantly powerful elements. Had the Emperor opposed the military determination on war and had he refused to approve the order for the Pearl Harbor attack, there would seem, in the light of the facts as we now know them, little doubt that he would either have been by-passed by the armed forces, or actually held in restraint, so that the military could have their way. This does not relieve the Emperor of the technical responsibility for the war, but it indicates clearly that the Emperor himself was powerless to prevent the war.

So far as my own attitude and efforts were concerned, the following admission in an article on June 10, 1950, by Drew Pearson, one of the most prominent and influential columnists and broadcasters in our country, who had continually attacked



me during the war, gave me a considerable degree of satisfaction:

Grizzled Joe Grew has spent a lifetime working for his country. He began as a young career diplomat many years ago, worked his way to be Ambassador to Turkey, Undersecretary of State, Ambassador to Japan.

There were times during those days when I, as a reporter covering the State Department, used to be critical of Joe Grew. He was diffident, hard to understand, and, of course, it wasn't as hard for him to get ahead as for some, since he had a slice of the J. P. Morgan millions behind him.

In retrospect, however, I am convinced that some of my criticism of Joe Grew was wrong. Certainly he was right and I was wrong about the Emperor of Japan, who he felt would be a healthy influence, first toward surrender, second toward making Japan a democratic nation after surrender.

This was a very gratifying statement. But even in such a generous eulogy, myths, I suppose, will always persist. How helpful that illusory "slice of the J. P. Morgan millions" would have been! Jack Morgan did marry one of my cousins, a very dear cousin, but no Morgan millions or any other millions ever came my way. I still remember my invariable rule at my first post in Cairo: a ten-cent instead of the usual five-cent cigar only on Saturday nights.

To Cordell Hull [April, 1944]

#### POSTWAR PLANNING COMMITTEE

In view of the fact that I am to take over the direction of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs on May 1, I am glad to have this opportunity to express certain views with regard to the shaping of our Government's plans for dealing with Japan after the war.

The problem seems to me to envisage two fundamental desiderata: (1) To render Japan incapable of ever in future threatening the peace; (2) to establish order in Japan with the

least possible delay and with the least possible foreign personnel.

In order to achieve these desiderata we shall do well to avail ourselves of whatever elements in Japan may lend themselves to the attainment of one or both of those ends.

In anticipation of our invasion and occupation of areas in Japan, we cannot with certainty foresee what, if any, such elements we may find. Many imponderable factors are involved. Probably, for instance, we shall not know in advance what the effect of the impact of the war and of defeat may be on the thinking and attitude of the so-called liberal elements in Japan who originally were opposed to the war, and of the Japanese people as a whole. We have no yardstick to measure by, for Japan has never lost a war in modern times. We probably shall not be able to foresee with any certainty, prior to invasion and occupation, whether the Japanese people as a whole will follow guerrilla tactics or whether they will co-operate in maintaining order, thus greatly reducing the number of military and civil personnel necessary to enforce order. We shall have to be prepared for anything. But we can make at least a reasonable estimate of probabilities based on our knowledge of the psychology and tendencies of the Japanese people.

The Japanese people, through long-inculcated habits of regimentation and discipline, are somewhat like sheep in following leaders. Without intelligent leadership, they tend to disintegrate. Without intelligent leadership, chaotic conditions might develop.

At the outset, after invasion and occupation, that leadership will necessarily devolve upon the foreign military command, and the amount of actual force necessary to maintain order will depend in large measure upon the wisdom of the measures which the military command may take and the manner in which those measures are effected. Face saving is a powerful factor in Japan. If the co-operation of the Japanese metropolitan police, as distinguished from the Japanese military police, could be secured at the outset, the maintenance of order would probably be ensured at the start with a minimum of foreign



military personnel. If a reasonable degree of tact is employed, it seems to me probable that such co-operation will be forthcoming. But we must not depend on it.

Once the initial measures are put into effect by the military command, the logical second step will be to explore the possibilities of enlisting the co-operation of Japanese civil authorities in providing the necessary leadership. Such co-operation, in my judgment, will in all probability be forthcoming if a statesmanlike manifesto is issued by the foreign military command at the outset. Such a manifesto should, in forceful terms, make clear to the Japanese people three fundamental purposes of the command: first, the maintenance of order; second, the carrying out of measures designed to render Japan incapable of undertaking future military aggression; third, the desire and intention of the occupying force to ensure to the Japanese people subsistence and an adequate livelihood. In such a manifesto the Japanese people should be told that they will have much to gain by co-operation, much to lose by recalcitrance. The determination to punish Japan's military leaders and those responsible for acts of cruelty and brutality not essential to military operations in war would fall within point two and might well be set forth in the manifesto.<sup>2</sup>

The enlistment of the co-operation of Japanese civil leadership will be of prime importance if we are to avoid the necessity of maintaining for a long period a vast military and civil army of occupation. Some degree of foreign occupation will no doubt be necessary for a long time to come, but it should obviously be one of our primary aims to reduce so far as possible the number of personnel required merely for the maintenance of order and to shift that burden as soon and as far as possible to the shoulders of the Japanese themselves.

In considering the question of available Japanese civil leadership, the potential use of the institution of the Throne immediately presents itself.

<sup>2</sup> See the Statement of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers on Occupation Policy of September 9, 1945. Raymond Dennett and Robert K. Turner (eds.), *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, VIII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 273-75.

In approaching this question we should be very careful to divorce ourselves from the prejudices and much of the unsound and uninformed thinking of the great majority of our people with regard to Japan. In the light of Pearl Harbor and especially of the barbaric cruelty and brutality of the Japanese military, those prejudices are wholly reasonable, and to the extent that those prejudices guide us in rendering Japan utterly incapable of ever again threatening world peace, we shall do well to keep them constantly before us. On the other hand, we must not let those sometimes blind prejudices deter us from attaining the ends we seek by adopting the most practical means of achieving those ends. In our democracy, Government must constantly listen to public opinion, but sometimes it is wise, in the best interests of our country, to lead rather than to follow public opinion when that opinion is uninformed as to facts. During my ten years in Japan I very often had occasion, especially when my recommendations based upon intimate knowledge were ignored, to wish that this could have been done. . . .

The prejudice in our country today against the Emperor of Japan is intense. The artificiality of the absurd myths of the Emperor's divine origin and the artificiality of the Shinto cult are just as well known to the thinking people in Japan as they are to you and me. These things are accepted by the Japanese much as our people as a whole accept the standardized myths about George Washington as set forth by Parson Weems. But regardless of the artificiality of those myths, which of course have a profound influence upon all Japanese thinking and action, the fact remains that the institution of the Throne in Japan is a cornerstone and a sheet anchor. If, after final victory, we wish to avail ourselves — as common sense would dictate — of any assets that we find in Japan which can be used for the maintenance of order as distinguished from the maintenance of the military cult, we would in my judgment, simply be handicapping the pursuit of our ultimate aims by any attempts to scrap or to by-pass the institution of the Throne. Should we insist on so doing, I can see only chaos emerging from such a decision.

The point has been advanced in some quarters that merely



by bombing the Imperial residence we would rid the Japanese people of the myth of the invincibility of the Emperor and of his alleged protection by the Sun Goddess and that the Emperor would thereby lose caste and be discredited in the eyes of the people. This in my opinion is a very shortsighted view and a view based on an inadequate understanding of Japanese psychology. On the contrary, I believe that such an act on our part would weld the Japanese people together more firmly than ever in a solid wall of hatred and would rally all shades of opinion against us. On my return from Japan, when General Doolittle [Commander of the Eighth Air Force] told me that he had been under great pressure to bomb the Emperor's palace but that he had discarded the plan, and asked me what I thought, I told him that he had made a most fortunate decision. The Japanese military authorities have tried, through propaganda, to create such hatred against the United States and the American people, but it seems to me highly doubtful if any genuine hatred of us is universal or perhaps even widespread in Japan today. At any rate, it is certain, in my judgment, that far from discrediting the Emperor the intentional bombing of his palace would render our future efforts to secure the co-operation of the Japanese people in creating order and peace a thousandfold more difficult.

Another point that has been advanced is that just as long as the Emperor is retained in postwar Japan, he will personify and perpetuate the myth of Japan's racial predominance and manifest destiny to rule the world, and therefore the cult of military aggression.

We must carefully examine that argument. It is very difficult for our people to understand the place of the Emperor in the Japanese picture. He has been and is surrounded by an aura of mythology, propaganda and regimented abject obeisance. Yet in practice he is nothing more than a symbol, and it is perhaps not without significance that not only are his personal wishes continually ignored but efforts have more than once been made in modern times to assassinate him. The cult of manifest destiny and of military aggression has been artificially

developed, and the Emperor has quite simply been used as a convenient facade to justify and to consecrate that cult in the eyes of the people. I therefore say, without qualification, that the Emperor can be used equally well — indeed far more easily — to justify and to consecrate, if you will, a new order of peaceful international co-operation.

As for Hirohito himself . . . we have no adequate yardstick to help us foresee what he might do under unprecedented circumstances, and it is unwise ever to predict with certainty any Japanese action or reaction. We know, as clearly as anything can ever be known of what goes on behind the screen in Japan, that Hirohito was always opposed to war with the United States. He himself chose the name for his administration, namely "Showa" — "enlightened peace." I find that the opinion of substantial foreigners who have lived long in Japan almost unanimously share that view, and I was interested in reading the following item in the London *Times* of March 24, 1944:

Sir Robert Craigie, British Ambassador in Japan until the outbreak of war, who was the chief guest of the Over-Seas League at luncheon yesterday, said that he was convinced that the Emperor of Japan, who acted on the advice of his counsellors, was never in favour of the present war. During the time Sir Robert Craigie was in Tokyo the Emperor showed many indications of his personal desire to avoid plunging his country into war.

This is all water over the dam now, and I repeat that we cannot with any certainty foresee what the effect of the impact of the war and of defeat may be on the thinking and attitude of the so-called liberal elements in Japan, including the Emperor himself. Until we learn these things, some of our plans for occupation of Japan must necessarily be only tentative. But unless the Japanese themselves wish to abolish the institution of the Throne on the ground that it has failed to achieve victory and has therefore let them down — an unlikely contingency, I think — it would seem to be common sense on our part to preserve and to support any nucleus in Japan which



may serve as a rallying point for the preservation and maintenance of order as opposed to the preservation and maintenance of the military cult. If Hirohito fades out of the picture, his Oxford-educated brother, Prince Chichibu, or his minor son, the Crown Prince, might step into his shoes. It is the institution rather than the individual that is important.

In this connection, I should like to repeat a statement made in my address to the Illinois Educational Association in Chicago on December 29, last [1943]. Parts of that address were misreported and distorted in the press and aroused considerable editorial controversy, including the following passage as actually delivered:

There are those in our country who believe that Shintoism is the root of all evil in Japan. I do not agree. Just so long as militarism is rampant in that land, Shintoism will be used by the military leaders, by appealing to the emotionalism and the superstition of the people, to stress the virtues of militarism and of war through emphasis on the worship of the spirits of former military heroes. When militarism goes, that emphasis will likewise disappear. Shintoism involves Emperor-homage too, and when once Japan is under the aegis of a peace-seeking ruler not controlled by the Military, that phase of Shintoism can become an asset, not a liability, in a reconstructed nation. In his book *Government by Assassination* [published in New York, in 1942] Hugh Byas writes: "The Japanese people must be their own liberators from a faked religion."

It seems to me, and to many students of Japan with whom I have conferred, including Admiral Harry Yarnell [former Commander in Chief of the Asiatic Fleet], whose thinking and policy have been about as hardheaded as those of any of us, that the foregoing thought is sound and makes sense. Any cult which has been artificially created, as has the Shinto cult, can always be molded to suit new conditions, and if the institution of the Japanese Throne can in future be turned toward peaceful international co-operation, as it was in the days of the Shidehara diplomacy, Shintoism, since its essence is support of

the Throne, can and may prove to be an asset rather than a liability in a healthy postwar reconstruction. The Japanese are past masters at executing the maneuver of right-about-face.

*At the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's hearings on the appointment of Mr. Grew as Under Secretary of State on December 12, 1944, Senator Joseph Guffey said:*<sup>3</sup> "Mr. Ambassador, the newspapers have reported that you favor keeping Hirohito in power after the war. Were you correctly quoted? ..." Mr. Grew replied:

"I appreciate the courtesy of the committee in allowing me to set straight certain distortions of fact contained in an article from the Philadelphia Record of December 6, which was published in the Congressional Record on that date. In that article the statement occurs:

"'Since Pearl Harbor and his return to the United States, Mr. Grew has frequently advocated a policy of doing business with Emperor Hirohito after the war. He says we must preserve the Mikado as a Japanese symbol around which a stable, peaceful government can be built.'

"Permit me to say, Mr. Chairman, that never since my return to the United States after our 6 months of internment in Japan have I made such statements or advocated such a policy as are attributed to me in the article under reference. I should like to take this opportunity very briefly to set forth my precise attitude on this question, especially as the misquotation and distortion of 1 or 2 of more than 250 public speeches which I have made in our country, trying to tell our people something about what we are up against in fighting Japan, have been widely published and have conveyed an entirely erroneous impression of my position.

"My position, in a nutshell, is this: When we get to Tokyo — and we certainly will get there, in due course — our main objective will be to render it impossible for Japan again to

<sup>3</sup> See *Nominations — Department of State, Hearings, Committee on Foreign Relations, 78th Cong., 2d Sess., pp. 17-19.*



threaten world peace. We shall first have to maintain order, primarily to provide our army of occupation with conditions which will facilitate their task and safeguard the lives of its personnel, and, secondarily, to conduce toward the attaining of our main objective. We shall then have to take specific measures to demilitarize Japan, both physically and intellectually. This will obviously include, among other things, the destruction of the Japanese military machine and the destruction of their tools of war and the paraphernalia for making those tools of war in future.

"The accomplishment of these objectives in the post-surrender period in the shortest practicable space of time will be a matter of first importance. The American people will not only expect but will demand a high degree of perfection in our planning, so that the achievement of our security aims as they relate to Japan and therefore the repatriation of our soldiers in the army of occupation will not be unnecessarily prolonged. But many still imponderable factors inevitably enter into that planning. Japan has never lost a war in modern times. We therefore have no yardstick to measure the eventual impact on the Japanese mind of the cataclysm of destruction and defeat. Before we allow any Japanese authority to emerge in the post-surrender period, we can, and I hope we will, require it to demonstrate that it will be co-operative, stable, and trustworthy. But if we were to prescribe in advance the eventual Japanese political structure that will follow military occupation, thus severely circumscribing the compass within which such structure could take shape, we would necessarily have to assume the responsibility for any delay in achieving our security objectives and in bringing home our soldiers. We shall have to be governed by facts and realities rather than by theories when the time comes to act, and in taking measures for the attainment of our objectives, we shall wish to avail ourselves of whatever may appear to be assets and to eliminate as far as practicable whatever may prove to be liabilities. This seems to me to be plain common sense.

"But now with regard to the institution of the Emperor, I do not think that anyone is yet in a position to determine definitely whether it is going to be an asset or a liability. Whatever decisions are made they should certainly be made on a purely realistic basis and on the basis of intimate contact with the various current factors involved in the problem. It must be remembered today, if we are not to repeat the errors of the past, that Japanese attitudes and reactions have not conformed in a single important respect to any universal pattern or standard of behavior. We shall have learned nothing from the past if we assume that Japanese reaction in any specific instance is going to conform to a universal pattern.

"I have never held and have never stated that the Japanese Emperor should be retained after the war, nor have I ever held or stated that the Japanese Emperor should be eliminated after the war. I believe that the problem should be left fluid until we get to Tokyo and our authorities and the authorities of those of the United Nations directly concerned can size up the situation and can determine what will best conduce to the attainment of our objectives. I do not believe that the solution of this problem can intelligently or helpfully be reached until we get to Tokyo.

"I have a feeling that the importance of the Emperor institution, especially as a factor in the dynamic aspects of Japanese policies and actions, has been greatly exaggerated. It is argued that it is the existence of this institution that made possible Japanese militarism and aggression. This argument must be examined in the light of the fact that during the preceding period of Japanese aggression in the sixteenth century, when the ruling war lord tried to conquer Korea and China, the imperial family had been barely maintaining a shadowy existence for several centuries. Unlike the war lords of today, whose conquests, they proclaim, are due to the 'august virtues of the Emperor,' whose instruments they proclaim themselves to be, it was Hideyoshi, the shogun or military dictator, and not the Emperor, who said that when he had conquered China and



Korea he would make himself and not the Emperor the master of the world.<sup>4</sup>

"The Emperors in those days were completely overshadowed by the shoguns and were usually hard put to it to maintain a bare living. My point is, therefore, that the Japanese do not need to have an emperor to be militaristic and aggressive, nor is it the existence of an emperor that makes them militaristic and aggressive. There are conditions more deeply rooted in their social structure and concepts growing out of that social structure which have to be exorcised in one way or another. It will be one of our fundamental objectives to remove those conditions. As I have said, no one today can predict what effect the impact of the cataclysm of defeat will have on the Japanese mind. There might be a complete revulsion from all the archaic concepts of the past. The Emperor institution might on the other hand be the only political element capable of exercising a stabilizing influence. To understand the position of the Emperor in the Japanese political structure it might be useful to draw a homely parallel.

"As you know, the queen bee in a hive is surrounded by the attentions of the hive, which treats her with veneration and ministers in every way to her comfort. The time comes, however, when a decision of vital importance to the hive must be made. The hive vibrates as though in excited debate, and finally the moment arrives when the queen is thrust forth into the outside world, and the hive follows her to its new home.

<sup>4</sup> The date, 1192, has often been chosen to mark the beginning of the Shogunate. In that year the title of shogun, generalissimo, was bestowed upon Yoritomo, the first of the line of military rulers to bear the title. The end of the Shogunate came in 1868, when the Tokugawa shogun was defeated in civil war, and sovereign power was restored to the Emperor. At various times during this period of over six hundred years the shoguns were as impotent in wielding power as were the emperors. In the sixteenth century, for instance, the feudal lords, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, exercised in succession the real power in Japan, completely dominating the figurehead shogun. Kenneth Scott Latourette has written that those "who had proved their capacity by seizing the actual power constituted the real government and ruled either through old titles given in practice a new meaning or through new offices created to fill a felt need." *A Short History of the Far East* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), p. 217.

It was not the queen which made the decision; yet, if one were to remove the queen from the swarm, the hive would disintegrate.

"I do not wish to push the parallel too far, but I believe it describes with substantial accuracy the position in the past of the imperial institution. If a new condition has arisen, so much the better, but if the other possibility eventuates and the Emperor remains as the sole stabilizing force, I would not wish to have ourselves committed to a course which might conceivably fix on us the burden of maintaining and controlling for an indefinite period a disintegrating community of over 70,000,000 people.

"That, Mr. Chairman, represents in brief my position on this subject. That is why I have never advocated either the retention or the elimination of the Japanese Emperor after the war. I want to wait and see. I believe this to be plain common sense.

"It may be pertinent to add in this connection the statement of Chiang Kai-shek in his New Year's message to the Chinese armies and people on January 1, 1944, that in his opinion the question of what form of government Japan should adopt after the war should be left to the awakened and repentant Japanese people to decide for themselves. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In his radio address of New Year's Day, 1944, Chiang Kai-shek reported a conversation which he had held with President Roosevelt: "When President Roosevelt asked my views, I frankly replied, 'It is my opinion that all the Japanese militarists must be wiped out and the Japanese political system must be purged of every vestige of aggressive elements. As to what form of government Japan should adopt, that question can better be left to the awakened and repentant Japanese people to decide for themselves.'

"I also said, 'If the Japanese people should rise in a revolution to punish their war mongers and to overthrow their militarist government, we should respect their spontaneous will and allow them to choose their own form of government.' President Roosevelt fully approved of my idea. This opinion of ours is entirely based on the spirit of the joint declaration of the United Nations in 1942." Chinese Ministry of Information, *The Collected Wartime Messages of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek 1937-1945* (New York: The John Day Co., 1946), II, 779.



To Randall Gould, Editor of the American Edition  
of the Shanghai *Evening Post* and *Mercury*,  
April 14, 1945

... The really important point in all this, however, seems to me to be just this: if, after we get to Tokyo, some Japanese Government surrenders, that will be no guarantee whatsoever that the millions of Japanese soldiers throughout East Asia will stop fighting, and the mopping up of those tremendous areas would of course be a very long and costly process. If at that time however the Emperor could be led to issue an Imperial Rescript, which is sacred to all Japanese, ordering the Japanese Armies to lay down their arms for the future good of the country, that is the one thing that might do the trick and it might save the lives of tens of thousands of our own fighting men. That of course is a pure gamble, but it is a gamble worth considering, and I think we would make a great mistake to render such action impossible by determining in advance to eliminate the Emperor merely through prejudice. In other words, I would like to wait and see, and this seems to me to be plain common sense. . . .

Of course there is a great deal more to be said on this whole subject, which would take a book in itself. I am certain that we could not graft our type of a democracy on Japan because I know very well that they are not fitted for it and that it could not possibly work. If the Japanese themselves want to keep their emperorship we had better let them do it, while taking very good care that they never be allowed in future the paraphernalia for building the tools of war. If we were to eliminate the emperorship I have little doubt that the Japanese themselves would take it right back again as soon as our backs were turned, and we cannot very well occupy Japan permanently. There will be other ways of controlling their capacity to make war and, after what is coming to them in the present war, I don't believe the Japanese people will have much stomach for recreating a military caste and a military machine for a long time in the future.

Our views on this matter of the treatment of the emperor-

ship in the post-defeat period are consistently supported by every type of evidence that we can get of the actual and present-day thinking of the Japanese masses. It is significant that the Japanese communists in China make no reference whatever to the emperorship in their propaganda directed at Japanese troops in China and the Japanese people at home. Again, those Japanese prisoners of war who have been collaborating in our psychological warfare against Japan have, in every known instance, insisted that they shall not be required to say anything derogatory of the Emperor. Still again, polls taken among Japanese civilian internees at Saipan and elsewhere have elicited an overwhelming desire that the emperorship be retained. The Japanese involved in all these cases are almost entirely those belonging to the lower and lower-middle classes — peasants, partisans, shopkeepers and clerks. In the face of the clear evidence, it would seem unrealistic to plan today the elimination by fiat of a concept which appears still to be firmly rooted in the Japanese mind. . . .

#### JAPAN'S SURRENDER <sup>6</sup>

Much light has been shed since the war, in books, articles and reports from Americans in Japan during the occupation, on the developments leading up to Japan's surrender in August, 1945.<sup>7</sup> For a long time I had held the belief, based on my intimate experience with Japanese thinking and psychology over an extensive period, that the surrender of the Japanese would be highly unlikely, regardless of military defeat, in the absence of a public undertaking by the President that unconditional surrender would not mean the elimination of the present dynasty if the Japanese people desired its retention. I furthermore believed that if such a statement could be formulated and issued shortly after the great devastation of Tokyo by our B-29 attacks on or about May 26, 1945, the hands of the Emperor and his peace-minded advisers would be greatly

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Grew wrote this statement in 1950.

✓ <sup>7</sup> See especially Toshikazu Kase, *Journey to the Missouri*.



strengthened in the face of the intransigent militarists and that the process leading to an early surrender might even then be set in motion by such a statement. Soviet Russia had not then entered the war against Japan, and since the United States had carried the major burden of the war in the Pacific, and since the President had already publicly declared that unconditional surrender would mean neither annihilation nor enslavement, I felt that the President would be fully justified in amplifying his previous statement as suggested.<sup>8</sup> My belief in the potential effect of such a statement at that particular juncture was fully shared and supported by those officers in the Department of State who knew Japan and the Japanese well, especially by Eugene H. Dooman, formerly Counselor of the American Embassy in Tokyo, Joseph W. Ballantine, Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department, Professor George Hubbard Blakeslee, Chairman of the Far Eastern Area Committee of the State Department, all of whom I regarded as among our soundest experts on Japanese affairs, and others.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In a statement issued to the press on May 8, 1945, President Truman had said: "Our blows will not cease until the Japanese military and naval forces lay down their arms in unconditional surrender."

"Just what does the unconditional surrender of the armed forces mean for the Japanese people?"

"It means the end of the war."

"It means the termination of the influence of the military leaders who have brought Japan to the present brink of disaster."

"It means provision for the return of soldiers and sailors to their families, their farms, their jobs."

"It means not prolonging the present agony and suffering of the Japanese in the vain hope of victory."

"Unconditional surrender does not mean the extermination or enslavement of the Japanese people." U.S. Department of State, *The Department of State Bulletin*, May 13, 1945, p. 886.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Alexander H. Leighton in his book, *Human Relations in a Changing World* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1949), p. 55, wrote that "during the winter and spring of 1945 the analysts [of the Foreign Morale Analysis Division of the OWI] strongly advised the policy makers against employing attacks on the Emperor or the imperial institution in psychological warfare. It was believed that such lines would at best be wasteful and could well harden enemy resistance. On the other hand, the analysts thought that the Emperor might be

Then, on my own initiative, as Acting Secretary of State, I called on President Truman on May 28, 1945, and presented this thesis as set forth in a memorandum prepared immediately after that meeting, a copy of which I read aloud at a further conference in the Pentagon Building on May 29, 1945, in the presence of the Secretaries of War and Navy and the Chiefs of Staff. I also handed the President on May 28 a draft of a proposed statement which we in the State Department had prepared after long and most careful consideration.

In my own talk with the President on May 28, he immediately said that his own thinking ran along the same lines as mine, but he asked me to discuss the proposal with the Secretaries of War and Navy and the Chiefs of Staff and then to report to him the consensus of that group.<sup>10</sup> A conference was

turned to good use in lowering resistance if the enemy were told that the decision regarding his fate after an Allied victory would be up to the Japanese themselves." Leighton also stated, p. 126, that it "is evident from what has been presented here that as early as May, 1945, the Division had concluded that the Japanese determination to fight was seriously undermined. . . . The first indicators of the downward trend had been noted as early as January."

In *Great Mistakes of the War* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), pp. 92, 95, Hanson Baldwin wrote: "It is therefore clear today — and was clear to many even as early as the spring of 1945 — that the military defeat of Japan was certain." The United States "demanded unconditional surrender, then dropped the bomb and accepted conditional surrender, a sequence which indicates pretty clearly that the Japanese would have surrendered, even if the bomb had not been dropped, had the Potsdam Declaration included our promise to permit the Emperor to remain on his imperial throne."

"More important, however," wrote Admiral Ellis M. Zacharias in *Secret Missions* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 335, "were recent intelligence reports disclosing a definite Japanese trend which could be exploited to move the Japanese toward surrender, or at least a termination of hostilities prior to our invasion of Japan proper. Among these was a very significant report given in the utmost secrecy to one of our intelligence officers in a neutral capital. It outlined in great detail the course Japan intended to take and stated that General Koiso would soon resign and permit the appointment as prime minister of Admiral Suzuki, an old confidant of the Emperor and leader of what I even then had come to call the 'peace party.' Moreover, the document indicated that the Emperor himself was leading a group of influential personalities desirous of obtaining peace terms under the most favorable circumstances."

<sup>10</sup> James Forrestal on page 69 of the book *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), edited by Walter Millis with the collaboration of



therefore called and was held in the office of the Secretary of War in the Pentagon Building on May 29, 1945, and the issue was discussed for an hour. According to my memorandum of that meeting it became clear in the course of the discussion that Mr. Stimson, Mr. Forrestal, and General Marshall (Admiral King was absent) were all in accord with the principle of the proposal but that for certain military reasons, not then divulged, it was considered inadvisable for the President to make such a statement at that juncture. It later appeared that the fighting on Okinawa was still going on, and it was felt that such a declaration as I proposed would be interpreted by the Japanese as a confession of weakness. The question of timing was the nub of the whole matter, according to the views expressed. I duly reported this to the President, and the proposal for action was, for the time being, dropped.

When Mr. Byrnes became Secretary of State over a month later, I endeavored to interest him in the importance and urgency of a public statement along the lines proposed, but during those few days he was intensely occupied in preparing for the Potsdam Conference, and it was only on the morning of his departure for Potsdam that I was able to hand him a draft on which a declaration might be based. This was the draft I had shown to the President. Mr. Byrnes was already on his way out of his office to drive to the airport, and his last action before leaving was to place our draft in his pocket. Mr. Stimson was then already in Europe and I urged Jack McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, when he met him over there, to tell Mr. Stimson how strongly I felt about the matter.

Mr. Stimson did take energetic steps at Potsdam to secure the decision by the President and Mr. Churchill to issue the

E. S. Duffield, says, "Mr. Grew was of the impression that the President had indicated that he was not in accord with this point of view" (that we should indicate now that the Japanese, after surrender, should be allowed to retain their own form of government). Mr. Forrestal was clearly mistaken in this conception of what I had said. I made it quite clear in the meeting in Secretary Stimson's office on May 29, 1945, attended by numerous witnesses, that on this point the President had assured me that "his own thinking ran along the same lines as mine" but that he wished me to consult our military and naval authorities. — J. C. G.

proclamation. In fact, the opinion was expressed to me by one American already in Potsdam, that if it had not been for Mr. Stimson's wholehearted initiative, the Potsdam Conference would have ended without any proclamation to Japan being issued at all. But even Mr. Stimson was unable to have included in the proclamation a categorical undertaking that unconditional surrender would not mean the elimination of the dynasty if the Japanese people desired its retention.

The main point at issue historically is whether, if immediately following the terrific devastation of Tokyo by our B-29s in May, 1945,<sup>11</sup> "the President had made a public categorical statement that surrender would not mean the elimination of the present dynasty if the Japanese people desired its retention, the surrender of Japan could have been hastened."

"That question can probably never be definitively answered but a good deal of evidence is available to shed light on it. From statements made by a number of the moderate former Japanese leaders to responsible Americans after the American occupation, it is quite clear that the civilian advisers to the Emperor were working toward surrender long before the Potsdam Proclamation, even indeed before my talk with the President on May 28, for they knew then that Japan was a defeated nation. The stumbling block that they had to overcome was the complete dominance of the Japanese Army over the Government, and even when the moderates finally succeeded in getting a decision by the controlling element of the Government to accept the Potsdam terms, efforts were made by the unreconciled elements in the Japanese Army to bring about nullification of that decision. The Emperor needed all the support he could get, and in the light of available evidence I myself and others felt and still feel that if such a categorical statement about the dynasty had been issued in May, 1945, the surrender-minded elements in the Government might well have been afforded by such a statement a valid reason and the necessary strength to come to an early clear-cut decision.

"If surrender could have been brought about in May, 1945, or

<sup>11</sup> The following quotation is taken from a letter to Mr. Henry L. Stimson, February 12, 1947.



even in June or July, before the entrance of Soviet Russia into the war and the use of the atomic bomb, the world would have been the gainer.

"The action of Prime Minister Suzuki in rejecting the Potsdam ultimatum by announcing on July 28, 1945, that it was 'unworthy of public notice' was a most unfortunate if not an utterly stupid step. Suzuki, who was severely wounded and very nearly assassinated as a moderate by the military extremists in 1936, I believe from the evidence which has reached me was surrender-minded even before May, 1945, if only it were made clear that surrender would not involve the downfall of the dynasty. That point was clearly implied in Article 12 of the Potsdam Proclamation that 'The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as . . . there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government.' This however was not, at least from the Japanese point of view, a categorical undertaking regarding the dynasty, nor did it comply with your [Henry L. Stimson's] suggestion that it would substantially add to the chances of acceptance if the ultimatum should contain a statement that we would not exclude a constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty.<sup>12</sup> Suzuki's reply was typical of oriental methods

<sup>12</sup> See Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1948), pp. 619-27, where Mr. Stimson has written: "I wrote a memorandum for the President, on July 2, which I believe fairly represents the thinking of the American Government as it finally took shape in action. This memorandum was prepared after discussion and general agreement with Joseph C. Grew, Acting Secretary of State, and Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, and when I discussed it with the President, he expressed his general approval." In this memorandum Mr. Stimson said that he felt that a statement should be issued to the Japanese, assuring them among other things of the "withdrawal from their country as soon as the above objectives of the Allies are accomplished, and as soon as there has been established a peacefully inclined government, of a character representative of the masses of the Japanese people. I personally think that if in saying this we should add that we do not exclude a constitutional monarchy under her present dynasty, it would substantially add to the chances of acceptance."

In an article in the February, 1947, issue of *Harper's Magazine* Mr. Stimson further explained his position in 1945. *On Active Service* contains quotations

in retaining his supposed bargaining position until he knew precisely what the Potsdam Proclamation meant in that respect. The Asiatic concern over the loss of assumed bargaining power that might arise from exhibiting what might be

from this *Harper's* article with Stimson's and Bundy's further comments and explanations.

"Many accounts have been written about the Japanese surrender. After a prolonged Japanese Cabinet session in which the deadlock was broken by the Emperor himself, the offer to surrender was made on August 10. It was based on the Potsdam terms, with a reservation concerning the sovereignty of the Emperor."

"This Japanese reservation precipitated a final discussion in Washington. For months there had been disagreement at high levels over the proper policy toward the Emperor. Some maintained that the Emperor must go, along with all the other trappings of Japanese militarism. Others urged that the war could be ended much more cheaply by openly revising the formula of 'unconditional surrender' to assure the Japanese that there was no intention of removing the Emperor if it should be the desire of the Japanese people that he remain as a constitutional monarch. This latter view had been urged with particular force and skill by Joseph C. Grew, the Under Secretary of State, a man with profound insight into the Japanese character. For their pains Grew and those who agreed with him were roundly abused as appeasers."

"Stimson wholly agreed with Grew's general argument, as the July 2 memorandum shows. He had hoped that a specific assurance on the Emperor might be included in the Potsdam ultimatum. Unfortunately during the war years high American officials had made some fairly blunt and unpleasant remarks about the Emperor, and it did not seem wise to Mr. Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes that the Government should reverse its field too sharply; too many people were likely to cry shame. Now, in August, the Americans were face to face with the issue they had dodged in previous months. The Japanese were ready to surrender, but, even after seeing in dreadful reality the fulfillment of Potsdam's threats, they required some assurance that the Potsdam Declaration 'does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.'"

"August 10 was hectic in Washington. Radio reports from Japan announced the surrender offer before official notification reached Washington by way of Switzerland. At nine o'clock Stimson was called to the White House where the President was holding a conference on the surrender terms. All those present seemed eager to make the most of this great opportunity to end the war, but there was some doubt as to the propriety of accepting the Japanese condition."

"The President then asked me what my opinion was and I told him that I thought that even if the question hadn't been raised by the Japanese we would have to continue the Emperor ourselves under our command and supervision in order to get into surrender the many scattered armies of the Japanese who would own no other authority and that something like this use of the Emperor must be made in order to save us from a score of bloody

\* as - to end war as quickly as possible, agreed to not advising to public the US intent to keep the Emperor.  
i.e. get surrender without threat of public attack to

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Aug. 28



OR - nearly  
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which he didn't know  
(over years). But Stimson, Byrnes...

interpreted as a sign of weakness is always uppermost in Japanese mental processes. He can seldom be made to realize that the time for compromise has passed if it ever existed. This explains but certainly does not excuse Suzuki's reply, and the result of his reply was to release the atom bomb to fulfill its appointed purpose. Yet I and a good many others will always feel that had the President issued as far back as May, 1945, the recommended categorical statement that the Japanese dynasty would be retained if the Japanese people freely desired its retention, the atom bomb might never have had to be used at all. . . ."

*The memorandums of Mr. Grew's conferences with President Truman on May 28 and at the Pentagon on May 29, as well as further documents on the surrender of Japan, follow:*

May 28, 1945

This morning, on my own initiative as Acting Secretary of State, I asked for an appointment with President Truman and went to see him at 12.35 P.M., accompanied by Judge Samuel Rosenman [Special Counsel to the President] with whom I had talked the matter over in advance. I set forth the purpose of our visit as follows:

In waging our war against Japan it is an elementary and fundamental concept that nothing must be sacrificed, now or in future, to the attainment and maintenance of our main objective, namely to render it impossible for Japan again to threaten world peace. This will mean the destruction of Japan's tools for war and of the capacity of the Japanese again to make those tools. Their military machine must be totally

Iwo Jima and Okinawas all over China and the New Netherlands. He was the only source of authority in Japan under the Japanese theory of the State. (Diary, August 10, 1945) BOT - Byrnes suggested

"The meeting at the White House soon adjourned to await the official surrender terms. Meanwhile Secretary Byrnes drafted a reply to which Stimson gave his prompt approval. In a later meeting this masterful paper was accepted by the President; it avoided any direct acceptance of the Japanese condition, but accomplished the desired purpose of reassuring the Japanese."

Wagler

destroyed and, so far as possible, their cult of militarism must be blotted out.

With the foregoing fundamental concepts as a premise it should be our aim to accomplish our purpose with the least possible loss of American lives. We should, therefore, give most careful consideration to any step which, without sacrificing in any degree our principles or objectives, might render it easier for the Japanese to surrender unconditionally now.

While I have never undertaken to predict with certainty anything that the Japanese may do, we must remember that the Japanese are a fanatical people and are capable of fighting to the last ditch and the last man. If they do this, the cost in American lives will be unpredictable.

The greatest obstacle to unconditional surrender by the Japanese is their belief that this would entail the destruction or permanent removal of the Emperor and the institution of the Throne. If some indication can now be given the Japanese that they themselves, when once thoroughly defeated and rendered impotent to wage war in future, will be permitted to determine their own future political structure, they will be afforded a method of saving face without which surrender will be highly unlikely.

It is believed that such a statement would have maximum effect if issued immediately following the great devastation of Tokyo which occurred two days ago. The psychological impact of such a statement at this particular moment would be very great.

In a public message to his troops sometime ago Chiang Kai-shek, whose country has suffered more from the Japanese than any other country, said that in his opinion a defeated and penitent Japan should be permitted to determine its own future political structure.

The idea of depriving the Japanese of their Emperor and emperorship is unsound for the reason that the moment our backs are turned (and we cannot afford to occupy Japan permanently) the Japanese would undoubtedly put the Emperor and emperorship back again. From the long range point of



view the best that we can hope for in Japan is the development of a constitutional monarchy, experience having shown that our system of democracy in Japan would never work.

Those who hold that the Emperor and the institution of the Throne in Japan are the roots of their aggressive militarism can hardly be familiar with the facts of history. For approximately 700 years the Japanese Emperors were deprived of their throne in practice and were obliged to eke out a precarious existence in Kyoto while the Shoguns who had ejected them ruled in Tokyo, and it was the Shogun Hideyoshi, not the Emperor, who in the sixteenth century waged war against China and Korea and boasted that he would conquer the world.

The Emperor Meiji who brought about the restoration of the Throne in 1868 was a strong man who overcame the militaristic Shoguns and started Japan on a moderate and peaceful course. The Emperors who followed Meiji were not strong men and it became relatively easy for the military extremists to take control and to exert their influence on the Emperors. If Hirohito had refused to support the military and approve the declaration of war in 1941 he would in all probability have suffered the fate of his predecessors. In any case whether he was or was not war-minded he would have been powerless to stem the tidal wave of military ambition.

The foregoing facts indicate clearly that Japan does not need an Emperor to be militaristic nor are the Japanese militaristic because they have an Emperor. In other words, their militarism springs from the military clique and cult in the country which succeeded in gaining control even of the Emperor himself and rendered powerless the Emperor's advisers, who in the years before Pearl Harbor were doing their best to restrain the hotheads. The assassinations in February, 1936, were undertaken by the military extremists for the specific purpose of purging the peace-minded advisers around the throne. General Tojo and his group who perpetrated the attack on Pearl Harbor were just as much military dictators as were the Shoguns in the old days and the Emperor was utterly powerless to restrain them regardless of his own volition.

The foregoing facts do not in any way clear Hirohito from responsibility for the war for, having signed the declaration of war, the responsibility was squarely on his shoulders. The point at issue is that the extremist group would have had their way whether the Emperor signed or not. Once the military extremists have been discredited through defeat the Emperor, purely a symbol, can and possibly will be used by new leaders who will be expected to emerge once the Japanese people are convinced that their military leaders have let them down. The institution of the Throne can, therefore, become a cornerstone for building a peaceful future for the country once the militarists have learned in the hard way that they have nothing to hope for in the future.

I then submitted to the President a rough draft of a statement which he might wish to consider including in his proposed address on May 31. The President said that he was interested in what I said because his own thoughts had been following the same line. He thereupon asked me to arrange for a meeting to discuss this question in the first instance with the Secretaries of War and Navy, General Marshall and Admiral King and that after we had exchanged views he would like to have the same group come to the White House for a conference with him. I said that I would arrange such a meeting at once for tomorrow morning and I asked Judge Rosenman to join us, which he said he would do. (The meeting was arranged in Mr. Stimson's office in the Pentagon Building for 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.)

Judge Rosenman thought that our draft statement could be somewhat tightened up and suggested three or four points which we shall endeavor to include in the statement.

DRAFT PROCLAMATION BY THE HEADS OF STATE  
U.S. — U.K. — [U.S.S.R.] — CHINA

[Delete matters inside brackets if U.S.S.R. not in war]  
(Completed in Department of State May, 1945)

(1) We, — The President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, [the Generalissimo of the Soviet



Union] and the President of the Republic of China, representing the hundreds of millions of our countrymen, have conferred and agree that the Japanese people shall be given an opportunity to end this war on the terms we state herein.

(2) The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west [have now been joined by the vast military might of the Soviet Union and] are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied nations to prosecute the war against Japan until her capitulation.

(3) The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power backed by our resolve *will* mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

(4) Are the Japanese so lacking in reason that they will continue blindly to follow the leadership of those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation? The time has come *for the Japanese people* to decide whether to continue on to destruction or to follow the path of reason.

(5) Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

(6) There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

(7) Until such a new order is established *and* until there is convincing proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed,

Japanese territory shall be occupied to the extent necessary to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

(8) The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine.

(9) The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes, with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

(10) We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. Democratic tendencies among the Japanese people shall be supported and strengthened. Freedom of speech, of religion and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

(11) Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as are determined to offer no potential for war but which can produce a sustaining economy and permit the Japanese to take their part in a world economic system, with access to raw materials and opportunities for peaceful trade.

(12) The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established beyond doubt a peacefully inclined, responsible government of a character representative of the Japanese people. [This may include a constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty if the peace-loving nations can be convinced of the genuine determination of such a government to follow policies of peace which will render impossible the future development of aggressive militarism in Japan.<sup>13</sup>]

(13) We call upon the Japanese people and those in au-

<sup>13</sup> This last essential sentence of paragraph 12 was omitted from the Potsdam Declaration. — J. C. G. For the text, as released to the press, see U.S. Department of State, *The Department of State Bulletin*, July 29, 1945, pp. 137-38, and *infra*, p. 1437, n. 15.



thority in Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.

May 29, 1945

At the President's request in our talk yesterday I called a meeting this morning in Secretary Stimson's office in the Pentagon Building. The following were present:

Mr. Stimson, Secretary of War;  
Mr. Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy;  
General Marshall, Chief of Staff;  
Mr. Elmer Davis, Director of OWI;  
Judge Samuel Rosenman, Counsel to the President;  
Mr. Eugene H. Dooman, Department of State;  
Joseph C. Grew, Acting Secretary of State.

Admiral King, Chief of the Bureau of Naval Operations, was absent. I brought Mr. Davis, Judge Rosenman and Mr. Dooman with me.

The purpose of the meeting which I explained at the start, was to discuss the question as to whether the President, in his forthcoming speech about our war with Japan, should indicate that we have no intention of determining Japan's future political structure, which should be left to the Japanese themselves, in the thought that such a statement, which had already been made by Mr. Hull and by Chiang Kai-shek, might render it easier for the Japanese to surrender unconditionally instead of fighting fanatically for their Emperor. The meeting lasted for an hour and in the course of the discussion it became clear that Mr. Stimson, Mr. Forrestal, and General Marshall were all in accord with the principle but for certain military reasons, not divulged, it was considered inadvisable for the President to make such a statement just now. The question of timing was the nub of the whole matter according to the views presented. I undertook to inform the President of the consensus of the meeting.

To Samuel I. Rosenman, June 16, 1945

The campaign in Okinawa is likely to be finished in the not distant future and I am wondering whether, with the announcement of its fall, a suitable opportunity would not be presented for us to make some sort of public statement again calling upon the Japanese to surrender. As we are bearing the brunt of the war in the Pacific, I am not convinced that there is any good reason to defer such action until the meeting of the Big Three, and in my opinion the sooner we can get the Japanese thinking about final surrender the better it will be and the more lives of Americans may ultimately be saved.

As I have said to the President and to you, we must at every step make it abundantly clear that we propose to cut out the cancer of militarism in Japan once and for all. Having stated our position in that respect in no uncertain terms, and the tougher the language we employ the better, I think it will be a matter of plain common sense to give the Japanese a clearer idea of what we mean by unconditional surrender. The President has already stated that this does not mean extermination or enslavement, but there are two further points which would make it vastly easier — if they could be specifically announced — for a peace movement to get started in Japan, and I have no doubt that there are elements in Japan today who clearly realize that they have everything to lose and nothing to gain by continuing the war. The foregoing arguments are amply confirmed by the Psychological Warfare Branch of the Army on the basis of the interrogation of intelligent prisoners selected for their reliability after a long process of screening.

The two points which I have in mind are, first, the fact that once we have rendered the Japanese incapable of again building up a military machine and once they have convinced us of their intention to fulfill their international obligations and to co-operate for the furthering of common peace and security, the Japanese will then be permitted to determine for themselves the nature of their future political structure. Chiang Kai-shek said just this in his address on New Year's Day, 1944. The second point is that we have no intention, when the foregoing matters have been taken care of, to deprive the



Japanese of a reasonable peacetime economy to prevent starvation and to enable them gradually to work their way back into the family of nations. These things have never been clearly brought out and, while there are many people in our country who will not be in sympathy with any such assurances, I believe that the more intelligent elements in our press and public will recognize that it is plain common sense to save perhaps tens of thousands of American lives by bringing the Japanese to unconditional surrender as soon as possible. They will presumably also recognize the fact that we cannot occupy Japan permanently and that it is not going to be in our long-range interests to create permanent festering sores anywhere in the postwar world so long as we do not recede an inch from our determination to render the Japanese impotent to bring about future breaches of the peace. . . .

I understand that the President is to have a talk with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Monday afternoon and it may be that he would wish to bring up these points at that time. I cannot see any advantage in indefinitely delaying some sort of a public statement along the general lines suggested.

P.S.

One consideration which leads me to attach special importance to the making of a proposed statement at the end of the Okinawa campaign, and in any event before the landing in Japan, is the likelihood that the very large casualties which we are likely to suffer during the assault operations in Japan might create a state of mind in the United States which would be wholly unreceptive to a public statement of the character now proposed. I have received competent military opinion to the effect that the military operations in Japan cannot be anything but costly in terms of human lives, and if we had refrained previously from taking any action which would create a condition favorable to the making of peace advances by the Japanese, I would expect no possible alternative than to let matters take their course until the bitter end.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For a statement as to the number of casualties expected from a landing on Japan, see *ibid.*, p. 619.

Date: June 18, 1945

SUBJECT: Appointment with the President, 9.30 A.M.  
PARTICIPANTS: The President; The Acting Secretary,  
Mr. Grew.

I went to the President at 9.30 this morning and took up the following matters:

1. The President said that he had carefully considered yesterday the draft statement which I had given to Judge Rosenman calling on Japan for unconditional surrender to be considered for release at the moment of the announcement of the fall of Okinawa but that while he liked the idea he had decided to hold this up until it could be discussed at the Big Three meeting. I said to the President that I merely wished to square my own conscience at having omitted no recommendation which might conceivably result in the saving of the lives of thousands of our fighting men so long as we did not recede an inch from our objectives in rendering Japan powerless to threaten the peace in future. I wanted to see every appropriate step taken which might encourage a peace movement in Japan and while it was all guesswork as to whether such a statement would have that effect I nevertheless felt very strongly that something might be gained and nothing could be lost by such a step and in my opinion the sooner it was taken the better. The President having ruled against the step at this time, there was of course nothing more to be done but I felt that this question should be kept prominently in mind. The President asked me to have the subject entered on the agenda for the Big Three meeting and I so informed H. Freeman Matthews [Director of the Office of European Affairs].<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> At Potsdam on July 26, 1945, the following statement was issued by the United States, Great Britain, and China: "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

"Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her



Memorandum for the Secretary of State, from

Joseph C. Grew, August 7, 1945 *after Hiroshima before 50 entry*

Ambassador Patrick Hurley [in China] in his telegram of August 4 requested the views of the Department on the position to be taken by the American delegate on the Far Eastern and Pacific Subcommittee of United Nations War Crimes Commission, now sitting in Chungking, in the event that the question of listing the Japanese Emperor as a war criminal is brought up in the Subcommittee.

Mr. Green Hackworth of the Department in his appended memorandum of August 6, brings up the point that the Department would probably be subjected to considerable criticism if the impression should go out that we are hedging or are not clear in our own minds with respect to the Emperor. He feels that our decision can be taken now as well as later. He recognizes the fact that political expediency might have to be taken into account but he feels that in the administration of justice we should not be influenced by expediency.

I have given a good deal of thought to this subject and am inclined to feel that if Japan refuses to heed the Potsdam Proclamation and declines to surrender unconditionally, necessitating our invasion of the main Japanese islands by force and the inevitable loss of life which will occur among the Allied forces in the event of such invasion, the Emperor of Japan might well be treated as a war criminal in order that full justice should be done. The listing of the Emperor does not mean that he will be convicted. This will depend upon the evidence, part of which will relate to the question whether the Emperor has taken part in the planning and carrying on of the war with all of its atrocious aspects or whether he is a mere

economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to re-arm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

"The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people a peacefully inclined and responsible government."

symbol without power to control or influence his military leaders.

In this particular problem, however, I do not think that we can afford to disregard the factor of political expediency. We have good reason to believe that important elements in Japan, including some of their elder statesmen as well as high officers in the Army and Navy, are trying to bring about an acceptance of the terms proposed in the Potsdam Proclamation. We know, for instance, from secret but unimpeachable information, that Sato, the Japanese Ambassador to Moscow, formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been earnestly recommending this course and we believe it possible although by no means certain that this movement may gain headway to a point where the advocates of peace will be able to overcome the opposition of the military extremists and their present control of the Emperor. If they succeed in persuading the Emperor to issue an Imperial Rescript, which is regarded throughout Japan as a sacred document, ordering all Japanese armies to lay down their arms for the future good of the country, the war might thereby be brought to an end. Short of fighting to the last ditch within Japan itself it is not believed that the war is likely to come to an end in any other way as it is improbable that the Japanese armies in China, Manchuria and elsewhere would obey such an order from any Japanese Government without the sanction of the Emperor.

If it now becomes known that we have agreed to the listing of the Emperor as a war criminal — and if we take such a position it will almost certainly leak to the public in short order — the effect in Japan would in all probability be to nip in the bud any movement toward unconditional surrender and peace. The result, in all probability, would be to consolidate the determination of the Japanese people as a whole to fight on to the bitter end. Our decision therefore will be of prime importance and many thousands of American lives may depend on its nature.

I have not had an opportunity, owing to their absence from Washington, to discuss this question with Mr. Stimson and Mr.

MAGIC?



Forrestal but from what I know of their thinking I believe that they will probably share my views. I believe that in any case you will wish to discuss this matter with them as well as with the President. In the meantime I recommend that the appended telegram be sent to Ambassador Hurley directing him to inform the Department if the question of listing the Emperor as a war criminal is raised in the Subcommittee and expressing the Department's desire that the American delegate should not himself raise this question.

To Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, September 9, 1945

. . . As for the future, my guess is that the Emperor may prove to be an asset rather than a liability in stamping out the whole military caste and cult in Japan — and it will have to be a thoroughly radical surgical operation. . . . Once we rid him of the control of the militarists, my guess is that he will develop strength and will become a powerful asset in steering Japan into peaceful and constructive channels. But whether Hirohito remains or not — and I can't help feeling that he will have to take the responsibility for the war . . . the throne can and probably will become the safest guarantee against the rise of militarism in future. Without the future stabilizing influence of the throne, the field will be open for military dictators to maneuver themselves into power the moment our occupation ceases.

Let us remember, too, that the fable about the divinity of the Emperor is an artificial creation of the last eighty years — certainly not believed by intelligent Japanese — and whatever is artificial can be corrected over a period of time. MacArthur will have a difficult job of reconstruction and re-education, but it can be done, and once the Japanese people come to realize where their militarists have led them, I believe there will be an automatic reaction against the whole feudal system and that we shall find plenty of co-operation in starting that misguided country towards a New Deal. I should expect some kind of a constitutional monarchy to develop in due course. Any attempt to impose an outright democracy on the

Japanese would result in political chaos and would simply leave the field wide open for would-be dictators to get control. One can't live in a country for ten years without knowing these things.

But what I want to see first of all is the arrest, trial and punishment of every Japanese, high or low, who has been responsible for the utterly barbarous treatment of our prisoners. Until that has been done — and thoroughly done — we can know no rest.

At the same time we must set about destroying the whole military system, their tools of war and all their machines capable of making the tools of war.

The Japanese judicial system must be revamped and their courts and judges completely freed from the baneful control of the military police who directed the judiciary and dictated both convictions and sentences.

Free speech and a free press must be ensured, as well as free religion.

Finally the whole feudal system must be disintegrated and the Zaibatsu — the six or seven families who held control of the financial and economic life of the country through enormous cartels and great wealth — broken up and the farmers assured a higher standard of living.

Then, of course, re-education must be developed from the kindergarten to the university, with new text books and new curricula.

The job will be tremendous but it can and will be done. Meanwhile the Japanese, not more than some 60% of whom could subsist on the produce of their home islands, will have to be allowed access to but not control of raw materials afield and the development of light industry and peaceful trade abroad. If they ever in future try to rebuild a military machine — and we shall have to be on the watch for a long time to come — control of their imports of oil, iron and coal would make it impossible for them ever again to threaten any nation or the world with war. . . .



To Mr. and Mrs. Cecil B. Lyon,  
September 30, 1945

... You can have no idea how happy I am to be free, with no office hours.<sup>16</sup> The press and public called for a clean sweep in the Department and an entire reorganization and it is great fun to watch the new setup working, from the outside. The old Department never had been, and probably never will be, so well organized as during the Stettinius regime. I am told that there hasn't been a single meeting of the Secretary's Staff Committee since we left, yet that committee, which was composed of the ten highest-ranking officers, met every morning while we were there, discussed every important problem and coordinated all our activities, so that everyone knew what everyone else was doing. Yet the press and public insisted on the contrary and called for a complete change. Alas, they will be doing the same a year or so from now.

Another amusing sidelight is that the press and public insisted on getting rid of the so-called "Japan crowd" and "soft peace boys" in the Department. This was thoroughly done: Dooman resigned and Ballantine was replaced by John Carter Vincent, while Erle Dickover [Chief of the Division of Japanese Affairs] I believe is trying to get a foreign assignment. The funny thing about this is that our plan for the postwar treatment of Japan was a great deal more drastic than the plan finally sent by Byrnes to MacArthur. The "Japan crowd" and the "soft peace boys" wanted to go a lot farther than was finally done. . . .

<sup>16</sup> Mr. Grew had submitted his letter of resignation to the President on August 15, 1945.

## XXXVII

### The United States and the Soviet Union

*Shortly after the Yalta Conference the unity that had been achieved during the war and in the Crimea began to disintegrate. The Soviet Union, within two weeks of Yalta, started to violate commitments. The Russians delayed, for instance, the execution of certain military agreements. In the case of plans for the postwar control of Germany, the Soviet Union impeded the formation of the German Control Commission agreed to at Yalta.*

*The violation of the Polish agreement, however, caused the most concern. This agreement required that "the Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad." Foreign Minister Molotov delayed invitations to Polish leaders from London and Poland to come to Moscow to reorganize the Polish Government, and he tried merely to enlarge the puppet Lublin Government.*

*The Soviet Union also violated the "Declaration on Liberated Europe" in Rumania thirteen days after the agreement had been signed. The "Declaration on Liberated Europe" pledged the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union to "jointly assist the people in any European liberated state or former Axis satellite state in Europe . . . to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population. . . ." Instead of joint action in Rumania, the Soviet Union unilaterally forced the King to appoint a government formed by pro-Communist leader Peter Groza.*

*President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill protested these violations of the Yalta agreements. Already before the*